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INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 120271

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM TREASURY U/S LEVEY TO QATARI MINISTER  
OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AL-MAHMUD

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 3.

2. (U) Post is asked to deliver the letter below from Treasury Under Secretary Stuart Levey to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmad Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmud. Hard copy of original signed letter to follow.

3. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER:

Your Excellency:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me while you were in Washington in September. I share your view that open communication, even on difficult issues, can yield progress toward mutual goals.

During our meeting, we discussed an issue of concern to the U.S. - namely, the influence of Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi in Qatar's financial sector. I wanted to provide you with more detail so that you can better understand the nature of our concern and why we believe al-Qaradawi uses his prominence to support terrorism. First, al-Qaradawi uses his frequent media appearances to express strong view in favor of Hamas. Second, al-Qaradawi has several times used his religious authority to gain positions of influence in the Qatari financial sector - currently as Chairman of the Shariah Advisory Board for Qatar Islamic Bank. Third, al-Qaradawi is the Chairman of the U.S.-designated Hamas charity, the Union of Good. Given these three factors, there can be no doubt that when al-Qaradawi calls for funding to be sent to Gaza, he intends for people to direct funds to Hamas - rendering his influence in the formal financial sector troubling. In a telling example, he used a recent Al Jazeera interview to proclaim that even funds that are raised by illegal means are permitted to be sent to Gaza.

Al-Qaradawi's public support for Hamas, a designated terrorist group in both the European Union and the United States, while simultaneously serving at the Chairman of the Shariah Advisory Board for Qatar Islamic Bank, poses a risk both to the bank and to the Qatari financial sector as a whole. Although he may lack direct control over normal business operations, as Chairman of the Shariah Advisory Board, al-Qaradawi clearly holds a position of moral authority in the institution. He can exert influence over the collection and distribution of zakat funds for the bank by determining which of the bank's funds must be forfeited for failing to comply with shariah law and how those forfeited funds are spent. Of equal concern is that his relationship with the bank sends the wrong message to the financial sector about Qatar's and the bank's commitment to abiding by international standards. We recognize that your government cannot control the views al-Qaradawi espouses publicly, but we believe that the Government of Qatar should be concerned about his ongoing influence in Qatar's financial sector.

We would be happy to discuss this issue with you further, and we look forward to working with you and your government in

the future.

Sincerely,

Stuart A. Levey

END TEXT  
CLINTON